

April 4, 1952

Mr. E. Hodossy  
Arts and Letters for Liberty  
299 Madison Avenue  
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Hodossy:

This is in reply to your letter of 31 March 1952 to General Smith, Director of Central Intelligence. Since Gen. Smith is not in town I have been asked to reply to your letter to him as well as to your previous letter to me.

By this time you have probably received my letter of earlier this week in which I explained that the Agency is not in a position to lend any support to your organization. I do not think there is any possibility that this position can be any way altered even though you should discuss it with Gen. Smith. However, since he will not have returned to Washington at the time of your next visit, even this will not be possible.

Again let me express my regret that the Agency is not in a position to be more helpful in this matter.

Sincerely

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SPC/CFVK/mab  
4 April 1952

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# ARTS & LETTERS

299 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

MURRAY HILL 2-4239

*for Liberty*



March 31, 1952

Lt. General Walter Bedell-Smith  
Central Intelligence Agency  
2430 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Mr. Melchior Lengyel, the noted author of "Ninotchka" - which was a most effective instrument in one of the important Italian elections in holding communist votes to a minimum - had a conference with Col. C.F. Kann and Col. Thomas Farmer, on February 26th, 1952. The writer also attended this conference, in the course of which we outlined a program which would result in obtaining first hand information from leading writers and journalists, who know Mr. Lengyel either personally or by reputation.

As we did not hear from the above named officers, we take the liberty in asking, that you kindly give us the opportunity to discuss this matter with you in person.

The program, which we are to carry out in understanding with the State Department is outlined in the enclosed literature.

We intend to be in Washington April 7th and 8th. If possible we would like to pay our respect to you and discuss the subject matter more fully.

Thanking for your kind attention to this matter,  
we are,

Very truly yours  
ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY

By

*S. Hodossy*

# ARTS & LETTERS

299 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

*for Liberty*

MURRAY HILL 2-4239

CONFIDENTIAL

MODUS OPERANDI  
of  
ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY



- I. How to win the outstanding European writers and journalists to our side and through them make the acceptance and appreciation of the international policies of the United States possible.
- II. How to conduct effective anti-communist propaganda by the use of books, theatre and film.

The communists are making excellent use of literature by conducting propaganda through books, newspapers, theatre and film which represent the higher level of cultural and spiritual forces. They influence public opinion very strongly. They influence not only the intellectuals but the middle and lower classes as well.

The free nations made little use of these powerful instruments in molding public opinion. Most of their propaganda emanates from official or semi-official sources, which for obvious reasons are seldom given credence abroad. Such official agencies are not the proper organizations to produce anti-communist books, plays and films, as the individual writers of standing are disinclined to work with them. Without these creative native writers no propaganda work can make lasting and deep impression.

The production and distribution of such works of art must be in the hands of an independent organization. Any literary work to create favorable impression will fail in the realm of propaganda if an official agency of the United States is openly connected with it.

Our organization was called to life to work with the eminent creative artists as an independent entity. Its literary head Mr. Melchior Lengyel - whose film "Ninotchka" proved to be a powerful instrument in discrediting communism all over the world - is well known to the literati of Europe. His leadership will therefore be accepted by them readily. His world-wide reputation and many friendly connections abroad will help our work to a considerable extent.

Just how important literature is in the realm of propaganda, is attested by the fact that officials of our State Department and the Press expressed the opinion that "Ninotchka" was instrumental in holding to a minimum the communist vote in one of the important Italian elections. Mr. Lengyel prepared the stage version of this play which was presented in Paris and other capital cities of Europe with great success. Additional presentations are being prepared.

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Mr. Lengyel also prepared the radio version of his "Ninotchka" and placed it at the disposal of the Voice of America, which organization made excellent use of it in many languages.

Practically all leading writers are on the side of freedom and their cooperation will help our cause considerably. Their standing and reputation in their own countries will inspire confidence among the readers, and the patrons attending the showing of their plays and films.

The fact that our organization will publish and distribute the books and produce the plays and films of these writers, will be an important factor, as by so doing we will help them financially, which is a factor not to be neglected.

The leading writers of Europe are frequently very influential journalists and thus our help and active interest in their welfare will induce them to sell America abroad more forcefully than any official organization may hope to do. Their influence in their respective countries will be a great asset to the cause of freedom. The harnessing of their talents in our interest is most important in offsetting the very efficient propaganda of the communists.

## MELCHIOR LENGYEL

### LIST OF CREDITS

#### I. PLAYS:

##### A) BROADWAY PRODUCTIONS:

TYPHOON	Shuberts Production
CZARINA	Gilbert Miller Production
SANCHO PANZA	Russel Janney Production
ANTONIA	Gilbert Miller Production

##### B) MOSTLY EUROPEAN PRODUCTIONS:

NINOTCHKA	Theatre Gymnase, Paris
THE HAPPY ISLAND	His Majesty's Theatre, London
ANGEL	Budapest - Vienna - London - Paris, Milan and other Continental stages
THE DANCER	Long runs on a great number of European stages
GRATEFUL POSTERITY	Winner of the Award of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Letters
ROYAL BLOOD	A drama of Marie Antoinette's times
THE FIVE NAPOLEONS	Comedy success in Budapest, Vienna, etc.
MORTIMER	200 performances in Budapest
THE INVENTOR	Now under preparation
THE EXTRA DAY	A new mystery drama, produced by the Pasadena Playhouse
THE POSTMISTRESS	Comedy-drama success
DOUBLE TROUBLE	
THE WONDERFUL MANDARIN	Libretto for pantomime. Music by Bela Bartok
and many others	

#### II. PICTURES:

FORBIDDEN PARADISE	(Original story) Paramount-Lubitsch
CATHERINE THE GREAT	A screenplay. Alexander Korda Production with Elisabeth Bergner, Fairbanks, Jun.
ANGEL	Original play. Paramount-Lubitsch
NINOTCHKA	Original story and treatment. M.G.M.
TO BE OR NOT TO BE	Original story. Korda-United Artists, with Lubitsch directing
DAYS OF GLORY	Original story and treatment Casey Robinson, RKO, with Gregory Peck
THE ROYAL SCANDAL	Original play - Twentieth Century Fox - Lubitsch

#### III. PICTURES IN PREPARATION

TYPHOON	Original play and screen play Twentieth Century-Fox
EUROPEAN CIRCUS	Original story. Alexander Korda Production

# ARTS & LETTERS

*for Liberty*



299 MADISON AVENUE  
New York 17, N. Y.  
MUrray Hill 2-4239

*"Up with the tent! Come, noble gentlemen,  
Let us survey the vantage of the ground,  
Call for some men of sound direction:  
Let's lack no discipline, make no delay."*

SHAKESPEARE—RICHARD THE THIRD  
*Act 5—Scene III*

*In Charge of Literature—MELCHIOR LENGYEL  
In Charge of Production—ERNEST HODOSSY*

THE TIME has come to mobilize the writers, artists and creative workers against the world wide danger—a danger that threatens a black-out of the spirit, the subjection and extinction of free talent, the blocking of free research, of progress and development of new artists in literature, music, in the theatre and the cinema alike. No branch of art, no field of spiritual endeavor is free from this threat. It is *the darkest reactionary movement in the history of the human mind* and in the Communist countries it is backed by the entire power of the state, utilizing all possible means. This is the attack of the untalented upon the talented; the attempt of the intellectual underworld to gain domination in order to expel, destroy or force the true artists to become the slave workers of a filthy factory of falsehoods.

Communism knows well enough that its greatest enemy is the individual talent as carrier of the free thought; therefore its terror attacks not only the existing representatives of literature, art, music; but, like a new Herod, it also wants to destroy the future generations of poets and artists.

The results are already grievous. The great Russian literature which has produced giants, can be considered practically dead. The still surviving talented poets and musicians are constantly driven to humiliating apologies and kicked until they toe the party line. Those who cannot be broken spiritually, are destroyed physically. The former high cultural life of the satellite states—Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the others—has fallen to an all-time low level. Their world-famous artists and writers have either fled or fallen silent or have been killed or imprisoned. Their literatures, theatres, film studios are overwhelmed by the pseudo art of cheap and vulgar Russian Communist propaganda which is the only unlimited export article of Moscow. If this goes on for another ten or twenty years, not only culture and spiritual life will be destroyed—all that the creative artists have achieved for their countries and for the world—but in the Communist states the eternal artistic treasures of mankind will also be annihilated. Already there is a systematic campaign to



boycott, to mutilate in a barbarian way, to falsify and re-write the classics—all in the service of the party line. And as Communist aggression threatens physically all free countries all over the world, so it tries to overpower the domain of the spirit, for this is *the first condition of its expansion*.

For the physical protection of the free nations political and military alliances have been created. But in the defense of culture, of art of the free spirit very little is being done. Yet the organized state power and propaganda of Communism is constantly attacking with every means at its disposal and in full strength everything that stands for enlightened literature. It is high time that we turned to counter-attack. We fight Communist propaganda powerfully and persistently with the weapons of radio and press, but we also need high-level *intellectual* media which would present the art and literature of the free nations in their highest form to the world. This would have a decisive effect upon the great European cultural communities, the wavering intelligentsia; and at the same time would represent an outstanding weapon for the defense and propagation of the ideas of freedom. Let us make use of the great force, freedom in creative work, as compared to the propaganda of cheap and untalented Communist pseudo art. If we mobilize the arts and artists for freedom, if we expose Communist tyranny to contempt and ridicule, we serve the *true* aims of art, for this has been a part of the artist's mission for centuries. It was the artist's mission when he opposed feudal regimes and tyrants in defense of the oppressed peoples—and it is *today*, when the terror of Communist dictators threatens the world.

*In the fight against Communism the battle waged by the free spirit and art will be decisive. Liberation begins with the revolt of the mind* which unmasks the lying slogans of totalitarianism and the victory of this revolt can save the world from a new, terrible war. This is the basic idea and purpose for which the ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY have been launched.

## THE PROGRAM OF THE ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY

### I. LITERATURE

We intend to create *world-wide* contacts in every field of literature and art, both with individuals and societies in the defense of the ideas of freedom. Let every talented man feel that he is not alone. We intend to support the publication, translation and distribution of their works. Examples have shown that only talented, professional writers are able to clarify and unmask the satanic lie with which Communism is infecting the world. We will put emphasis on the publication and distribution of works by American authors which present the *true forms* and ideals of American life. On the other hand, we will explore pre-Communist Russian literature in order to reissue these works, proclaiming the ideas of freedom and humanism; works which the Soviet Union has withdrawn from circulation.

We propose to organize an annual literary competition to reward the most outstanding work in this field.

We intend to issue reports about our work and the events in the war of liberation of literature and art.

### II. THEATRE

In the Russian and satellite "peoples' democracies" every theatre, *without exception*, serves Communist propaganda. In contrast, there are hardly any plays on the American and European stages, some of the exceptions are Koestler-Kingsley's 'Darkness at Noon' and Lengyel's satirical comedy, 'Ninotchka,' that would take an authentic and effective stand in this problem which is of world-wide and decisive importance for the arts as well as for politics. The theatre is a mighty medium for the dispersal of the ideas of liberty. We intend to encourage playwrights to write topical, interesting and worthwhile plays to be staged. They need not forego the complete application of their art and talents; for the fight for freedom is the writer's natural element.

We intend to co-produce suitable plays with local producers in the various countries.

After the presentations in the capital cities, we will organize road shows in order to reach the hinterland. The workers and peasants in particular.

### III. FILM

In this field there is a great deal to do because unfortunately a good many American films with their brutal gangster stories and unreal characters have greatly contributed to the completely false conception of America all over the world. Without intending to exercise any censorship or to try and reduce the entertainment value of the films the ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY offers the altruistic services of its creative talents to the film industry. We intend to suggest stories and characters suitable for development into motion pictures. In the first place we will put *our rich book and play material*, to be assembled by us, at the disposal of the studios. We intend to appeal to the studios to use us as consultants as to the means and ways of showing the true and genuine American life in their pictures, always in an artistic and effective way and without disturbing the artistic unity of the individual films.

We also would like to inspire and if possible, support financially, foreign film productions engaged in the fight for the ideas of freedom. Life in the countries behind the Iron Curtain and the workings of Communism must be shown in their true colors. No commentary will be needed if we present the facts!

Through its work in the above fields the ARTS AND LETTERS FOR LIBERTY will proclaim truth to the world, to the misled and doubters, and show the essence of Communist tyranny. But beyond this, we intend to use every means in order to get our rich literary and theatrical material to the Iron Curtain countries.

*Every talented, successful book, play or film, serving the ideas of freedom, is worth an army.* We intend to mobilize these forces of the spirit in impressive strength.

ARTS & LETTERS

*for Liberty*

299 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.



Lt. General Walter Bedell-Smith  
General Intelligence Agency  
2430 E. Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C.

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REMARKS:

Note that DCI will be out of town  
 April 7-8-  
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